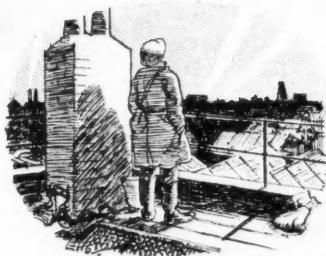




OUNC

OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI



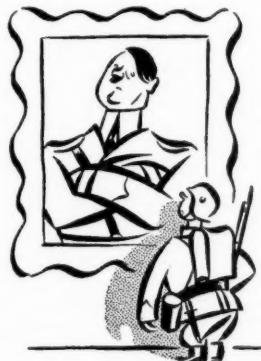
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October 1 1941

Charivaria

IT was noticed that MUSSOLINI on his visit to the Eastern Front wore a beret and not a peaked cap. One theory is that he is determined to show how annoyed he is with his navy.

A research chemist claims to have produced a form of synthetic silk out of coal. It is not revealed how he managed to produce the coal.



Signor MUSSOLINI now declines to pose for the Press photographers. We shall miss his cheery smile.

A Roumanian soldier captured by the Russians said he didn't know for what object he had been fighting. But surely he has seen a picture of it.

In these days, when public houses so often display the notice "No Beer," drinking-matches may be regarded as a form of sabotage.

"The Government can clamp down secrecy on what has happened and what is happening," says a writer. And also on what is going to happen, judging by the way the astrologers disagree about it.

Class Distinction

"The school pig is in a class of its own." —*Western Morning News*.

"London children evacuated to the country have lost their pale complexions," it is reported. Especially since the blackberries got ripe.

An American soldier who has the longest arms in the U.S. Army is said to be very shy. In that case it's lucky he doesn't have to ask people to pass the mustard.

Dr. GOEBBELS has instructed that there shall be silence in German restaurants when the news is broadcast. Any diner noticed to be choking into his soup is patted gently on the back with a rubber truncheon.

With the opening of the football season a shortage of referees is reported. Perhaps they were nearly all used up last season.

GOERING is said to be responsible for the idea that German parachutists should carry collapsible bicycles. The inspiration came to him suddenly when he was cycling.

It was recently announced in Berlin that the city had been attacked by British bombers when, in reality, they had not visited Berlin that night at all. By this means the impenetrable anti-aircraft forces of the German capital drive off the invaders with the greatest of ease.



Coming Attraction

"In this Hall on Sunday, 6 p.m.,
THE DEVIL."
Notice outside North London Hall.

New umbrellas are getting scarce. We understand that they are now practically unobtainable in many restaurants.

Having It Both Ways

(An attempt to imitate some of the high spots of our home propaganda)

IF no other voice can stir this unhappy country of ours from its serene and fatuous complacency and arouse it to a sense of its imminent overwhelming danger, let it be mine to do so.

Is it to be supposed that the continuous recital of successes by air and land and sea which comes from Broadcasting House almost immediately after it has been printed in the papers, that the Atlantic Charter, that the growing volume of American supplies, that the magnificent resistance of the indomitable Russians ought to cheer us up instead of making us feel more melancholy than we were six months ago?

Surely not, if we are wise. These things should make us more apprehensive than ever. It cannot be too often repeated that the better things seem the worse they are, and by an obvious corollary the worse they seem the better they must actually be.

Now then surely is the hour of our peril.

Do not suppose that because the gigantic forces of the West have been harnessed ever more tightly to our cause, making the collapse of the raging monster of Berserkgarten inevitable, do not imagine that because the courageous counter-thrusts of a billion and a half heroic Russians are beating back the drugged and discontented slaves of Hitlerdom, we can therefore rest on our oars and escape from the full fury of the blond super-beast when he turns in his stride to attack this earth, this England. It may be to-day. It may be to-morrow. It may be the week after next. We are the pivot, the vital link in the chain that forms the final bastion or lynchpin against the tide of barbarism which is sweeping over the world.

Be on the alert. Have you examined lately the air-raid shelter in your back-garden? Examine it. It is full of water. Underneath the water are the mushrooms, the cabbages, the seakale, which an excess of admiration for Mr. Middleton caused you to plant there a year or two ago. The beds have been cut up for firewood. The blankets have been eaten by moths, the books stolen by bookworms. Cobwebs stretch their length from rafter to rafter. The barometer is mildewed. The stocks of reserve provisions

were long ago devoured by rats, and the entrance is blocked by brambles and bindweed. Will this be a comfortable place to seek refuge in when the merciless exponents of Goering's *Luftwaffe*, fresh from their defeats in Muscovy, once more darken the daylight air or hurl their relentless thunder from the skies?

You reply that you are not taking refuge. You are not allowed to. You are fire-watching. Very well. Do you inspect your stirrup-pump every day to see that there are no mice in the works? How is your sand-bucket? During a tour of the sand-buckets of London I was astonished to find at hundreds of posts that cigarette-ends, matches, paper, apple-cores and a mass of miscellaneous rubbish was mixed up with the sand. In more than one case fire-watchers resented my plunging my hands into the bucket and sifting the contents through my fingers. Is this patriotism? I think not.

Your gas-mask? Is it in good order? Do you take it out daily and remove from it the bread-crumbs, the traces of cosmetics and all the other detritus which may tend to impair its efficiency at a moment of sudden crisis? Do you, if a civilian, always carry it? Very likely it is hanging up in a cupboard behind an old mackintosh. Take it down. Fit on the mask, and you will find that your head has grown fatter or thinner than it was when you wore it last. Hunger has hollowed your cheeks, or self-complacency has caused them to bulge. Of what use will a gas-mask so defective be when the arch-fiend of Prussian militarism unleashes the horror of chemical warfare on this demiparadise?

Work hard. Work always. Whether you labour for your country with head or hands, *avoid slackness*.

Those of you who are mothers of seven, and indeed many others, will during the last few days have been making tanks. Remember to go on making them. It is not enough to have made one tank, to have broken a bottle of cowslip wine over it, and dispatched it with a farewell wave of the hand across the sea to our hard-pressed but ever-victorious allies in the East. One tank in the vast struggle is but a flea-bite in the opposition to the cocaine-maddened Nazi hordes. Make another immediately.

And above all things do not suppose that, because winter is drawing near, the imperative need for iron-clad monsters to grapple with the Teutonic ogre is abating. Remember that *there is no snow in Russia*.

The belief in Russian snow has confounded the theories of a multitude of our so-called modern strategists. Happily M. Maisky has pricked this bubble. The climate of Russia during the winter resembles the climate of the Riviera. Flowers blossom on the tundras, and a gentle wind breathes lightly over the illimitable steppes from the Urals to the great table-land of the Ob. From Ivanovo-Voznesensk to Yaroshayl the whole terrain is admirably adapted at Christmastime to intensive mechanized warfare. In any case it is none of your business, and you have never heard of these places. Make tanks.

One last word. Remember that however much I may hector, bully, bribe, cajole, implore and insult you, however often I may treat you as if you were a 7-year-old child, and involve myself in contradictions from hour to hour, nothing can alter my belief in the sturdy commonsense, capacity for hard work and self-sacrifice, not to say the independent spirit of the average Briton.

EVOE.



"Cigarette, Corporal?"



LORD WARDEN OF THE EMPIRE



"D'you think you can paint a duck?"

Little Talks

WHY "tanks"? *Why tanks? Because they're the modern cavalry! They're the most mobile armoured—*

"Mobile." Quite. Then why "tanks"?

"Why?" What d'you mean? Why the name? "Tank."

I dunno. I've never thought about it.

I mean, if you sat down to-day and invented a new mobile armoured fort, a kind of land-destroyer, would you call it a "tank"?

I suppose not.

A tank being about the most static, stationary and unmoving piece of metal construction you can think of?

True. But—

I mean—you wouldn't think of calling a destroyer a "cistern," would you?

No.

You can hardly imagine a more peaceful and placid object than a tank—can you? I mean, a real tank?

But I'm talking about real tanks.

No, you're talking about military tanks—the things Lord Beaverbrook and the boys are producing, the things we're sending to Russia—

The things that may win the war.

Exactly. And, for such things, can you imagine a more unsuitable name than "tank"?

A tank's a tank, for a' that.

All jolly fine. But how can you expect the workers, troops and people to go on producing, fighting, and paying for these lethal units if you give them such a ridiculous and uninspiring name? "Tank"! A thing that sits at the bottom of the garden and goes rusty on top and green down below!

Well, what do you want? You can't call them battleships, can you?

I'm not sure. You talk about "cruiser-tanks" already. "Cruiser-tanks"! You might as well have "corvette-cisterns."

I see what you mean. Why are they called "tanks," by the way?

I'm not quite sure, though I was in the neighbourhood—in the last bicker—when they first appeared. But I fancy what happened was—when they were lying behind the line, under tarpaulins, and so forth, before their first battle, and people said "What are those things?" the official answer was "Oh, nothing. Just tanks."

And the name stuck?

Yes. But I see no good reason why it should stick still.

What would you call 'em?

Heaven knows. But not "tanks." "Tables" would be as good.

Land - destroyers? Land - cruisers? Land-battleships?

Land-submarines? No. That line will get you into a fearful bog. Lewis Carroll was the kind of man you really want for a job like this. He would have provided a brand-new vocabulary. He would have called a "tank" a "brillig" or a "tove."

It certainly "gyres and gibbles."

Undoubtedly.

How dull the New Yorker is getting!

The New Yorker? What's that?

It's an American funny paper.

Oh, yes. I remember. They say it's so good.

They do. I can't imagine why. I looked through a number a few weeks ago, and out of about seven pictorial jokes I could only understand two—and fifty per cent. of the two didn't amuse me.

Why should you understand their local fun?

Quite. But one of the oldest—and best—jokes in the New Yorker is that Americans can't understand the jokes in Punch. As you say—why should they?

Anyhow, poor old Punch has lasted for a hundred years—which is more than this paper you're talking about is likely to do.

On present form, they should make a hundred months—perhaps more. They're funniest when they try to take off Punch. That's a joke that lasts for ever.

I hope it will. But they won't.

It's interesting to see how the various humorists stand up to war. Nat Gubbins stands the test best. Beachcomber survives marvellously, but apparently he's not allowed to notice the war to any serious extent. Nat Gubbins does.

Timothy Shy is simply pathetic.

Yes. A Beachcomber-comber. They share the same joke for weeks together.

Very friendly. One of their big jokes is to imitate Punch as it was fifty years ago. I wonder what an extract from the Daily So-and-So as it was fifty years ago would look like.

I don't suppose it existed fifty years ago.

How jolly!

A dismal theme. Let's talk of other things.

All right. How d'you think the old war's going?

One moment. I must look at my diary.

Whatever for?

I want to see whether this is my "complacent" week or my "defeatist" week.

What on earth——?

Well, I'm sick of being lectured about my state of mind. If I'm cheerful I'm

told I'm a wishful-thinker, not "facing up to the issues." And if I "face up to the issues" I'm told I'm defeatist, spreading alarm and despondency. I've never yet found myself in the right mood at the right time, according to the leading articles.

So now you run a time-table of your own?

Yes. I have alternate weeks of Wishful Thinking and Facing the Facts. And I find it works very well. However gloomy I am one week I know I'll be fairly chirpy the next. And when I feel I'm oozing complacency I know it can't last long enough to be dangerous. And I don't have to read the leading articles at all.

And, on balance, you're always right. Jolly good show! Well, which are you this week?

I forget. And I've left my diary at home.

Too bad.

On the whole I think it feels like a Complacent Week. One thing that interests me is this. Before the Russians came in——

They didn't "come" in, did they?

Well, never mind. Before they were with us nobody said: "My hat! If the Russians don't fight the Germans we're done!" Most of us, indeed, hadn't the faintest notion that Hitler would be such an ass as to drag the Russians in. Yet we were just as "complacent" then as we are now—rather more so.

But now that the Russians don't seem to be doing so well you meet

people who talk as if all along our only hope was Russia?

Yes. And Russia's only hope, it seems, is us. "Aid Russia"—"Supply Russia"—and so on. Jolly good show—and all that. When you think of the size of this almost invisible island and the size of Russia, when you think of the few chaps we've got and what a lot of chaps they've got; when you think that we've got a small war on in almost every corner of the globe, while Russia, comparatively, is a merely one-string instrument—not to mention that everything we do is made simply hopeless by out-of-date, capitalistic, red-tape methods, while everything in Russia is done on the most enlightened and up-to-date lines——

Here, half a mo'!

When you think, I say, of all that——

Here, I'm not quite clear about——

When you think that this absurd little island with its decadent bits of Empire has stood completely alone against the mighty Hun for more than a year, with about half the world to defend against him, I think it's pretty marvellous that when Russia comes in, so many good people should seem to think that the Great Russia's lost unless we take her under our wing as well.

Well, we must do what we can.

Certainly. I hope we shall. We are. But, my hat! when I think of what we are doing—everywhere—I'm blown if I don't feel like having an extra Complacent Week. So there!

O.K. But keep it quiet. A.P.H.



"Colonel Knox seems to think it may spread to the lounge."

At the Pictures

PLETHORA

AMONG the new pictures with a claim of some kind to be noticed this time are *Man Hunt*, *Hold Back the Dawn*, *Love Crazy*, *Tall Dark and Handsome*, *This Man Reuter*, and perhaps *Parachute Battalion* and *The Parson of Panamint*. It simply can't be done. We will begin with what seems to me the most interesting and well made, and let the others take their chance.

Only the alert and reflective will perceive and understand the reason for the title of *Hold Back the Dawn* (Director: MITCHELL LEISEN). At one point CHARLES BOYER, among some of those intense and philosophical remarks habitually made in any film described (as this one is) as "a great love-story," observes to OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND: "We can't change our course any more than we can hold back the dawn." There is the phrase; what it means, as applied to the whole film, is a question. The story is about a Roumanian (Mr. BOYER) who marries an American school-teacher (Miss DE HAVILLAND) in a little town on the Mexican border, solely to be able to get over the border into the U.S. You see the point a mile away—love will dawn, of course; and so it does, and even the happy ending turns up, but the picture is incomparably better than these depressing particulars would lead you to expect.

It may be that one is hypnotized by the "frame"—the story is given a possibly spurious unity by being presented through a narrator. The Roumanian himself tells it to a film director; the episodes are linked by that much-imitated voice. He asks five hundred dollars for it so that he may repay the deceived girl, and considering—it is hard to resist this reflection—that it is filmed as it were word for word, exactly as he tells it, the price is exceedingly moderate.

I found the whole thing very

enjoyable. Mr. BOYER is brilliant, Miss DE HAVILLAND beautifully innocent, PAULETTE GODDARD radiant, glittering and vindictive as a lady from the Roumanian's shady past. The atmosphere of the seedy "Hotel Esperanza" and of life in the little Mexican town is admirably conveyed,

and there are many small parts excellently taken. This is the sort of picture that well repays a second visit.

The gangsters return gingerly, with disarming chuckles, knowing they can't compete with a real war. *Tall Dark and Handsome* (Director: H. BRUCE HUMBERSTONE) is nominally set in 1928, but merely for the sake of the basic premise of the plot; there are no other "period" trappings, and it is all played for laughs. The story is about a Chicago gang baron who won't kill people. The advantages of his method are well summarized by a victim: "If they tried to pin a killing on him, he could produce the corpse, still breathin'". Meanwhile if anyone cramps his style he just locks 'em up" (in the basement of his house, where a mass of "murdered" toughs lament the absence of feminine company). It makes a cheerful piece, often funny. Ceasing momentarily to be the *Cisco Kid*, CESAR ROMERO steps forward in time and perhaps sideways in morals—for this is no Robin Hood gangster: his virtue stops at not killing people. His chief henchman is MILTON BERLE, full of wisecracks; and his butler is the voice of the *Reluctant Dragon*, BARNETT PARKER, who most uncharacteristically packs a gat.

Man Hunt (Director: FRITZ LANG) is a pursuit story, enormously effective from time to time, but patchy. There are some first-rate scenes, but too much of the story unfolds in the Hollywood London, which is calculated to get on the nerves of almost anybody in this country. JOAN BENNETT's Cockney accent is possibly the phoniest that ever resounded from the screen.

Similarly unsatisfactory in a patchy way is *Love Crazy* (Director: JACK CONWAY), wherein for a short time we have the sad spectacle of WILLIAM POWELL getting laughs by dressing up as a woman, like any ham comedian who can't get a laugh any other way. . . . The rest? Crowded out. R. M.



J.H.DOWD

DECEIVERS NO. 1

Georges Iscovescu CHARLES BOYER
Emmy Brown OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND



J.H.D.

DECEIVERS NO. 2

Judy VIRGINIA GILMORE
Shep Morison CESAR ROMERO

Bees and the R.A.F.

A SECOND meeting of the Fly Inverted - Landing Committee was unexpectedly held yesterday evening in the R.A.F. Mess, Prangmere, when Group-Captain Boost commented on the recently published report of the previous meeting. He pointed out that this had attracted so much attention that even the Brains Trust had to be called in, and would Pilot-Officer Prune kindly stop mumble to Flying-Officer Talespin in that corner; if he had anything to say, for God's sake speak up and let 'em all hear.

Blushing deeply, Pilot-Officer Prune said, Sorry Sir, he just just saying, Sir, that it was *his* half-loop theory, Sir, that had gained most favour with the Brains Trust, Sir, and that he was just telling Talespin, who had, both at the time and now, disagreed, to put a sock in it, Sir.

Group-Captain Boost accepted the explanation.

Flying-Officer Talespin, speaking with heat, gave it as his considered opinion that Prune was a clot.

Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute, speaking to a waiter, gave it as his considered opinion that he wanted some beer.

Flying-Officer Talespin amended his previous remark to include twirp, adding that if Prune was so clever let him answer *this* one, and that, yes, he thought he'd join Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute in a light ale.

Pilot-Officer Prune, in conjunction with Pilot-Officers Nosedyve and Airscrew, asked what one.

Flying-Officer Talespin said this one he was going to ask now, couldn't a chap pause a second in conversation to order a drink without a horde of lower forms of life leaping down his throat? . . .

Wing-Commander Blower said, Now boys, chuck it, mind the furniture, let's hear the problem anyway.

Flying-Officer Talespin said if you had a largish box with a bee in it, said bee just taxying about the floor of the box, did the box weigh the same when the bee took off and became air-borne?

Wing-Commander Blower, Flying-Officer Flaps and Pilot-Officer Rudder, speaking together, said of course it did; while simultaneously Squadron-Leader Undercart and Pilot-Officer Airscrew said of course it didn't. Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute said here's how and Flying-Officer Talespin said mud in his (Lyne-Shute's) eye.

There was a pause. Group-Captain Boost then said, Well, what's the answer?

Flying-Officer Talespin, speaking with embarrassed respect, said he didn't know, it was a moot point.

Group-Captain Boost said very moot and laughed heartily. Pilot-Officer Rudder at once also laughed heartily and somewhat fulsomely.

Squadron-Leader Undercart said that once in the air the bee, like an aircraft, ceased to press on the ground or floor of the box; therefore there was that much less pressure and so weight.

Wing-Commander Blower said, So what? Something was keeping the bee up—he presumed of course it was circling the landing-ground—and that was the air-pressure from underneath; this must be transmitted downwards as well and be distributed over the floor of the box equivalent to the weight of a bee.

Flying-Officer Flaps wondered how much a bee weighed anyway, and was ignored.

Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute said the thought of the poor bee circling made him quite dizzy and he needed some beer to restore him. Pilot-Officer Nosedyve said that was an idea—him too.

Pilot-Officer Rudder said he agreed with the Wing-Commander, there was a box with a bee and some air, no not hot air, don't interrupt, which must weigh the same whether the bee was stoogeing around the 'drome or definitely grounded at Dispersal.

Rather shamefacedly, Flying-Officer

Talespin said he should have mentioned at the start that the box had holes in it, so that the air-pressure theory probably didn't work.

Pilot-Officer Prune said How big were the holes?

Flying-Officer Talespin said it didn't matter, they let the air out.

Pilot-Officer Prune said it did matter, they might let the bee out. It'd get tired of doing circuits and bumps, and push off on a sortie over a rose-bed or something.

Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute said this thing was getting him down, he needed a little beer to pull him through.

Pilot-Officer Airscrew said if there were holes, the box *must* weigh less when the bee took off. Flying-Officer Flaps said then where *was* the weight of the bee, you couldn't have weightless bees flying round any more than a weightless Spitfire. Squadron-Leader Undercart said bitterly a weightless Spitfire might be pretty useful for some people, particularly anyone who had damaged an undercarriage yesterday through a bad landing. Flying-Officer Flaps here picked up a Training Memorandum and took no further part in the discussion.

Wing-Commander Blower said, Boys, let's be practical; fetch me a box and a bee and the Mess kitchen scales.

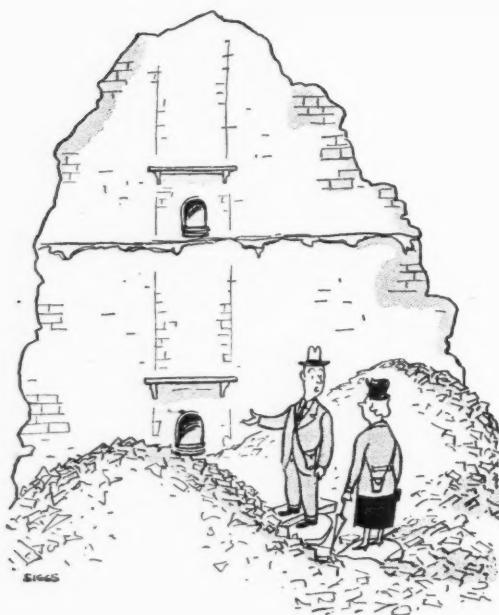
A search-party was mustered, and there was then a lull in the discussion till Pilot-Officer Nosedyve, speaking on behalf of the search-party, reported a box as present and correct, no bee, but would this wasp do which had just forced-landed on the window-sill, and a waiter was bringing the scales.

Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute said if the waiter was coming anyway, he might bring another beer while he was about it.

The Committee inspected the wasp, while Flying-Officer Flaps held it up by one aileron, and reported it highly somnolent. Pilot-Officer Prune said perhaps it was a night-fighter wasp which slept all day. Squadron-Leader Undercart said, Don't talk so loud, you'll wake it. He unfortunately spoke too late. The wasp woke up, took off, and flew by Standard Beam Approach up Pilot-Officer Prune's sleeve. Here its rear gunner put in a three-second burst which made Prune collide with the waiter carrying the scales, and the meeting adjourned in confusion, the last recorded minute being an inquiry by Flight-Lieutenant Lyne-Shute as to who was responsible for upsetting his beer.

A. A.





"There you are, it's what I've always said—anyone who had been sitting on the mantelpiece would have been perfectly safe."

No Guns on the Hearthrug

YOU can still buy crackers, I find, once you've hit on the right sort of shop and the right department in it. (Crackers are Stationery; it's merely a waste of time to go to Toys or Sports and Pastimes.) Also, they still contain paper caps and that very thin kind of red fish which curls up at both ends when placed on the palm, indicating Impulsiveness.

It is patriotic to buy crackers, because they make a tremendous amount of salvage when finished with. Put the plain white paper you find on the inside into a sack, separate from the crinkly coloured outside which should be smoothed out and folded into the shape of a V. Then sort the mottoes into bundles of fifty and tie them round with shreds of burst balloon. The official collector will then tip the whole lot together into a container full of old tins, and when the end of the war comes both of you will be able to say "I went all out."

While I was buying these crackers, which were for a birthday, the shop-assistant surprised me a good deal by assuming that I was getting them for Christmas. He said now was the time to do all my Christmas shopping. I told him I would have nothing to do with such insanity. I never feel generous in September. I could no more buy a desk calendar for a brother-in-law before the third week in December (at the earliest) than I could put holly on the grandfather clock in August. I would rather, I told the assistant, cut Christmas out altogether than start looking at Acceptable Calendars at this time of year.

He said he thought the calendars weren't in yet but would

inquire. While he was inquiring I left. He seemed a stupid type of man.

I went to the Toy Department and made certain discoveries—which I pass on for the benefit of those who want to do their Christmas shopping now.

The country is suffering from a serious shortage of guns. There are plenty of soldiers; I got some Horse Guards (I think), a Highland contingent, and an efficient-looking section of bomb-throwers in battle-dress. But they laughed at me when I asked for guns. I tried four shops, asking for a French Seventy-five or, better still, one of the old converted naval 4·5s we used to mow them down with when the world was young. At three shops they offered me nothing at all, but at the fourth a woman with rather an austere manner for a Toy Department (she would, I think, do better in the Glass and China) told me they had just one gun left. She then produced a tin thing with a handle at one side, which she turned, causing a rattling noise.

"But nothing comes out," I said.

"Oh, no," she said. "There's just the rattling noise."

"But I want to mow them down," I said; "not warn them to put their gas-masks on."

The woman said that as to that she didn't know, she was sure.

There is a bright side. A stout elastic band placed over the thumb of the left hand, pulled back to the full extent by the forefinger and thumb of the right hand and released smartly will bring down the proudest Horse Guard at a range of twelve to fifteen feet. Aim low and make sure the elastic is securely over the thumb before stretching. Otherwise you'll get a premature—and prematures are painful.

Soldiers, I have to report, retain that distressing tendency to break off short at the ankles, and the legs of horses buckle up with the old familiar ease. Match-sticks and glue remain the sovereign remedy for the former; for the latter I have found the following method as good as any. Take the twisted member gently between forefinger and thumb and apply a gentle pressure in the original direction of the limb. When almost straight the leg will be found to break off quite easily in the hand. Throw the unwanted piece away and trim the remaining legs to the required length. The horse should now stand more firmly than ever and may



"I'm afraid you're not smoking enough."

be considered, for the purposes of the battle, to be up to its hocks in mud.

There is no shortage of books about Pinocchio, nor of coloured blocks for making geometrical patterns—if you, or your children, care for that kind of thing. There are simply millions of Constructional Models of aeroplanes. There are some rather jolly cows and goats and so on. Forts continue to belong to the mediæval era, having gatehouses, keeps, machicolations and moats. It is something of a surprise to find them crowded with parachute troops menacing each other with tommy-guns. I did not notice any nuns with field-boots peeping out from under their skirts.

Total war has not yet, it appears, reached the nursery.

H. F. E.

○ ○

I Schpy!

*Herr Nasenparke lectures Fifth Columnists on
"Get Going, Do!"*

ON arrival, when you are snog in a kottage, bring to mind that it is not for you to remain thinking of nothing but the village fare and be blinking at the hefty misses in the fields, for that would never do.

O! No! You must always be agog on what you are about, for suppose, by exemplar, that your komizion was for to be if possible a crossroad sweeping at Whitehall, with the idea of lending an ear to murmur and pouring skruting upon skraps of dokumentary in the gutter—then immediately examine the Mrs. of the house, saying: "Which may be the way to the city of Londontown, by road or railing, if you will be so good as to let the information slip?"

When she has said "So-by-so," say with all casual mannerismus: "Pray tell me, where in Londontown is Whitehall? My aunt is there in residence?" also praising her fine scones or dainties.

As soon as you are acquainted with the transit, speak sourly of the dustiness of the rights-of-way in towns, how they are schmeared with oiling to the nuisance of passers, and praise the good works of those with brusch and broom who are paid to make a clean sweep, with the idea of polishing the route. Thus you may get a jobb as such and start schnooping.

O! so easy, see! So just be in mind, whatever your komizion may be, keep open on it your eyes and, nevertheless your englisch accent, do not falter to put the questions—but with an innocent air, of course, lest some inquisitive might klamp you in irons and take you into konzentration.

Think well of that exemplar, whatever your task, and go at once to the kommanded schpot to put your schpying into motion, lest you lapse in backslide towards the plutodemokratic temptation and think too highly of the englisch rationismus or perhap, alack! lest you (absolute forbidden) linger in the inns after hearing the necessary. And do not, whatever else, unless you are certain sche is schpy, proved herself also, go a-wooing, for you never know what person may not be police, even among the ladies, in plain clothes perhaps, what a schame, nowadays, I tell you.

○ ○

This Week's Bargain

"The bride, who was given away with veil and orange blossom headdress."—*Scottish Paper*.



THE CHANGING JOKES OF BRITAIN

"How did 'ee get on up in London, Dan'l?"

"Turrible, Silas—it were that quiet I couldn't sleep a wink."



"I wonder if you can tell me if the 'Pension Rosa' at Baden-Baden is still unscathed?"

Flying Through Georgia

A Recent Report

NEATH distant Ga.*'s benignant sky
There stands a flying-school
Whose youth—not theirs to reason why—
Bow to an iron rule;
They mayn't have this, they mayn't have that,
So stern their lot and hard
That horse and dog, that wife and cat
Are absolutely barred.

This in itself would seem enough,
But worse remains behind,
A limitation e'en more tough
To the reflective mind;
To sport that pride beneath the nose
Which for the sake of rhyme
I have to call moustachios
Is nothing less than crime.

Maybe the manly growth is banned
Lest rivalry should spread
Despondency and envy, and
Dissension rear its head,

Or the high ruler of the Show,
Finding that his won't come,
Decrees that what he fails to grow
Nobody shall, by gum!

The truth of this I've not been told,
But those that ride the skies
Have still an ample field for bold
And hairy enterprise;
The larger tract, the wider mug,
Is left entirely free,
Which is a boon those young men hug
No doubt with adult glee.

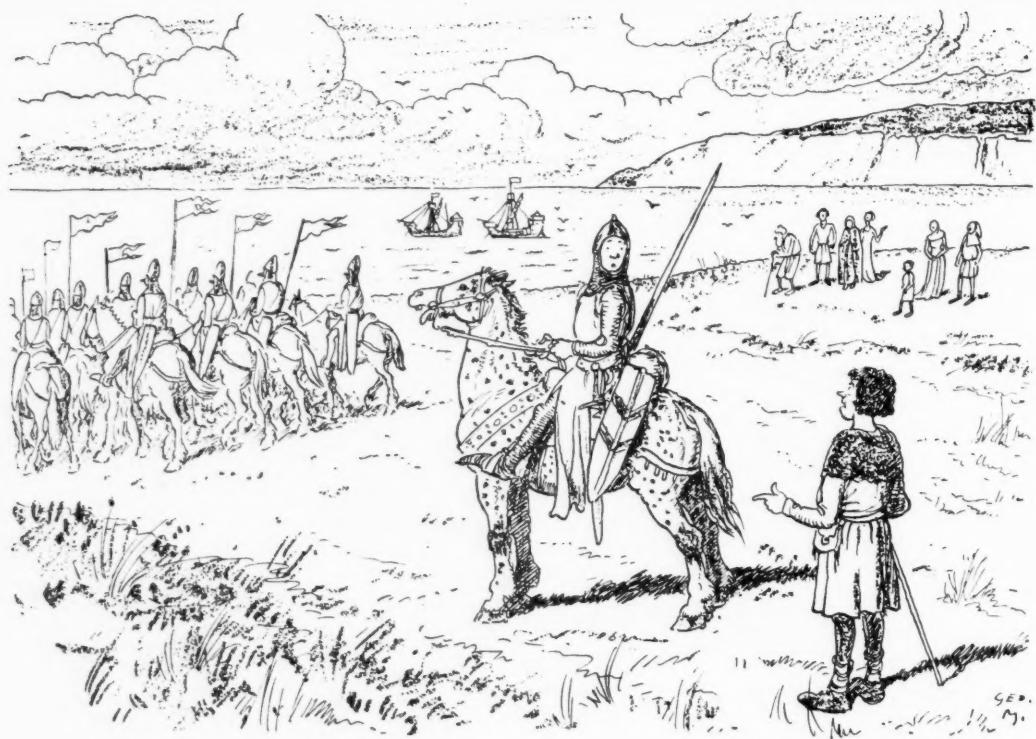
And happy Ga. can still be cheered
By many a pleasing crop
Of Newgate fringe or scattered beard,
Weeper or mutton-chop.
A stimulating sight, I ween;
One, at a moderate guess,
To beat the blushing Hippocrate
And the warm South, no less. DUM-DUM.

* "I was aware that it was so written, but not that it was so pronounced."
"Fact, sir, I assure you."—*The Wrong Box*.



THE MIXTURE AS BEFORE

"Do as I tell you, my friend, and you'll have nothing to fear from this scoundrel."



*"Off to Jerusalem, Sir Hugh?"
"Sb—b—b!"*

The Meteorologist

SCIENTISTS have proved conclusively that the weather is responsible for the survival of the human race. The sun, they say, warms us, and the snow cools us; we can neither inspire nor expire without assistance from the air; we eat corn—at least I don't myself, but I understand many people do—and we drink water, if pushed to it; and all these good things either *are* weather or owe their existence directly to it. Most important of all, we talk about the weather and so kill many an otherwise intolerable hour when we can neither eat nor sleep.

How happy, then, must be the meteorologist who really understands the weather! In peace-time he alone knows what it will be like to-morrow; and now his advantage is greater still, for he alone knows what it was like yesterday.

Yet few men become meteorologists, and no women. Women simply cannot tolerate the truth about the weather.

Men can, indeed, face the facts with strength, but only one in a million could undergo successfully the severe early training required for this profession. A whole year of preliminary study must be spent in learning to spell and pronounce the word "meteorological." This decimates the field of aspirants; the failures turn to something easy, like physics or biology. The successful ones then learn the rudiments of their subject—the direction of rotation of the sun, the order of precedence of thunder and lightning, the incidence of moonbeams, the cause, effects and cure of sleet; meanwhile they begin to collect the tools of the trade, starting perhaps with a couple of toy balloons and an hour-glass or egg-timer, and possibly an old bicycle-pump to produce artificial wind-currents. In their third year they study the Trade Winds and the Gulf Stream, the luckier ones visiting either or both; and their fourth they spend wandering at random about Great

Britain, where they can see at first hand the conditions they have previously known only in the laboratory. There is a stiff final examination, including catch-questions on topics like the stratosphere or the will-o'-the-wisp; and a stern twenty-four-hour practical during which the candidate is tethered to a rock somewhere in the Welsh hills and is instructed to forecast the weather for a week. Many of the answers are astonishingly pessimistic and accurate.

Behold now the finished product, the practising consultant at the height of his powers, a full-fledged Clerk of the Weather. He is easily recognized, for his equipment has been expanded since his student days. A barometer is slung from each wrist; from one breast pocket an ordinary thermometer is seen protruding, from the other a wet-and-dry-bulb thermometer, or hygrometer; a gold watch-chain carries an accurate chronometer at one end, a mariners' compass at the other; the

left hand is free, but the right holds a stout umbrella. The head is crowned by an attractive vane: the weather-cock itself is of course rotated by the wind, but the direction-indicator differs from the stationary models one sees on church steeples in that it is operated magnetically, like a compass. It is fashionable nowadays to carry also a car-mirror attached by means of a bracket to the right shoulder, so that the proud owner may determine the direction of the wind without disturbing his helmet. Finally, from the left shoulder rises a gay string of coloured hydrogen balloons, to be released at intervals during the day.

When he steps from his house in the morning it is a matter of the first importance for the meteorologist to determine whether or not it is raining. To do this he puts up his umbrella. The experienced worker can often detect by ear whether rain is actually falling, but if this method fails he will lower the umbrella again after five minutes and with his free left hand examine the upper surface for moisture. In this way he is able not only to establish the existence of rain but also its strength. If there is little or none, he will then furl the umbrella, release a balloon, and wait an hour before making another test; but if it is appreciable he will raise his standard again until the weather clears, and in this case no balloon is released, since its progress upwards cannot be conveniently observed.

Other conditions, such as snow, sleet and hail, are identified in a similar way. Excessive heat and cold are of course detected by the thermometer. Fog is more difficult; a simple visibility test may satisfy some practitioners, but a careful man will not rely on his own imperfect eyesight, and if he suspects the existence of fog, perhaps because he cannot find the other side of the street, he will compare the readings of his "wet-and-dry" with a chart attached to it to discover whether the humidity and temperature of the atmosphere favour the precipitation of fog. A serious discrepancy between the results of these tests will send him post-haste to his oculist, if he can find the way.

The most interesting of these daily routine activities is undoubtedly the application of Buys' Ballots law, which states that a man standing in the Northern Hemisphere with his back to the wind will have a region of lower atmospheric pressure on his left hand than on his right. There is no recorded case of failure of this law. Our hero selects a nice open space, perhaps in a public park, and slowly revolves until

BITTER WINDS AND ANGRY SEAS

THE Battle of the Atlantic finds the Navy and the Merchant Service keeping ceaseless vigil. Their efforts mean food supplies, munitions of war, protection of home, support for Forces overseas, constant watch upon the enemy—all these are dependent upon their selfless service. We shall never be able to repay our debt, but at least we can provide them with the comforts they deserve and make their winter hardships a little more bearable.

Won't you please help us? If this is your first introduction to the Fund will you please become a subscriber?

Donations will be gratefully acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie St., London, E.C.4.

he can see through his mirror that his wind-pointer is directed immediately behind his head. He now extends his arms slowly sideways and upwards and takes careful readings of his barometers; a gratified smile soon indicates that the left-hand reading is the lower. He now feels sure that he is safely ensconced in the Northern Hemisphere—knowledge that may well be enough to save his life. With a sigh of relief he turns again to his less spectacular duties, and releases his largest balloon to record the vertical air-currents. Occasionally, when for some exceptional reason he is sure of his position on the earth, he may use the law to determine the direction of the wind; this application is especially useful on days when its violence makes observation of the way difficult.

The meeting of two meteorologists in the street is a rare and pleasing sight. There is a formal greeting: umbrellas are raised in salute, right-hand barometers are clinked, compasses are compared, and the junior releases a balloon.

"Pleasantly anticyclonic this morning."

"Yes, but the alto-cumulus in the

north-west looks bad for the dew-point."

"Anything from Iceland?"

"Depression on the Polar Front, and fog on the floes towards Spitzbergen."

"Thin time coming, then. I shall put off my holiday for a week or two."

Here we must mention the one serious drawback to a meteorological life: it never includes a holiday. The expert always puts it off in time, for he knows too much.

But on the other hand he can look forward to his retirement with an eagerness shared by few other men, for he goes like a homing-pigeon to Iceland. This, of course, in peace-time; during the war, when his profession is of acknowledged and vital importance, he is determined to carry on like everyone else. But when his work is done and he has helped to return the last victorious bomber to its base, he will go and foregather by the hot springs with the other old masters and swap stories of the great drought of 'seventy-eight and the typhoon of 'fifty-one. There in their spiritual home the old prophets are content to talk endless shop; they have little mental communion with the native Icelanders, who find it all rather above their heads and go on placidly extracting an honest living from their guests, while continuing in their spare time to control, as they have done for centuries, the weather of the entire Northern Hemisphere.

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Rumours

WHEN a fellah meets a fellah
Somewhere on the Nile,
Then a fellah greets a fellah
With a friendly smile,
And a fellah keeps a fellah
Chatting for a while;

And that's the way the rumours
spread
All around the Nile!

○ ○

Work It Out For Yourself.

"Yours faithfully,
NOT A TYPIST, JUNIOR CLERK, MANUAL
WORKER OR WORKING WOMAN, BUT STILL
JUST AN ORDINARY ENGLISHMAN."
Letter to Local Paper.

○ ○

"Lost, Large Grey Tom Cat, black stripes.
Very timid. Answers to name of 'Tiger.'"
Advt. in South African Paper.

Don't call too loud.

At the Diversions

"PUNCH AND BEAUTY" (STOLL)

DESPITE the title of this entertainment it owes nothing to Bouvierie Street; neither by KNOX nor by NERVO has the script been edited. The name covers a variety programme, of which species a different one is to be seen each week at the Stoll Theatre, whose splendid stage is no longer limited to the showing of films. There should be room in Central London (and there is certainly room in the vast auditorium) for some jovial demonstrations of music-hall talent.

The old kind of music-hall was singularly deficient in music, but the performers were definitely hall-marked. It possessed the fourth and most important of the dramatic unities, unity of style. The comedians, whether coming from London or Lanark or Lancashire, whether in checks or kilts or clogs, were much of a glorious muchness. They abounded in plebeian vitality. They were noisy and raffish and traditional, a democracy of the red nose rather than of the red flag. The audience knew what to expect and habitually got it, so much so that the affair came at last and justly to be criticized as a Theatre of Monotonies.

But nowadays the varieties, for good or ill, are really various. In *Punch and Beauty* Mr. HARRY TATE, Junior, spoke loudly for the old school. Here, indeed, "not Amurath an Amurath succeeds, but Harry, Harry." The turn, complete with check trousers, gaiters, a swivel-moustache, a voice of ascending exasperation, and a motor-bicycle at once obstinate and collapsible, is an essay in filial piety. One might call it playing "Old Harry," but that would be too complimentary. Something, at least in this episode, is missing, in addition to TATE Senior's Dreadful Boy. It needs more invention both in words and deeds.

After this hearty example of "hall" came the music, provided by RAWICZ and LANDAUER, two pianists with but a single thought and a completely justified claim to the now familiar title of Key Men. Mr. JACK DOYLE and MOVITA, who would surely have given point to the name of the show, were absent

on my visiting-day, but Mr. DOUGLAS BYNG was very much on the spot, presenting more of those Byng Girls who majestically bestride the gulf between Dames in Pantomime and

appears to be blue. The jests are of the quick-fire type, forgotten as soon as grasped, and the comedian is very adroit in his discharge of them.

Mr. GASTON PALMER is the friendliest of jugglers; his smile is as persuasive as his hand. His motto would seem to be that you cannot make bricks without dropping them. He has a genius for missing the catch and then saving it before the ball has touched the ground. How charming he would be on a cricket-field! A master alike of pretended blunders and intended balance, he takes the audience to his heart whenever he touches the familiar implements of his trade.

I. B.



THE MERRY BUNGLER

MR. GASTON PALMER

Dames of the British Empire. The modish astrologers might say of Mr. BYNG's turn that his lucky colour



ONE OF THE BING GIRLS

MR. DOUGLAS BYNG

"CAVALCADE OF MYSTERY"

(ALDWYCH)

IT might be thought that the world is sufficiently full of problems to make puzzles and mysteries seem only our worry's crown of worry. But even now Man remains an indefatigable puzzler; incessantly he puzzles over detective stories, over general knowledge questions, and over problems set for him by the B.B.C. Yet again, at the Aldwych Theatre, he can puzzle with increased rapture over the deft disappearances of ladies (in and out of boxes or thin air), and rack his brains over the mystical surgery which so obviously dissects a lady and yet no less certainly leaves her a moment later both cheerful and complete.

Mr. CECIL LYLE has all the *panache* as well as all the apparatus and accomplishment of a great magician. Jugglers may practise their craft in rags and tatters and be all the more amusing for that, but the evening-dress of a conjurer must be as faultless as his palming. While he wafts bodies into space Mr. LYLE looks as though he were attending a meeting of the Diplomatic Corps.

He has for his allies in mystery Mr. ARTHUR PRINCE of the magically invisible voice and GIPSY PETULENGRO in full Romany rig-out. This colourful sage has the stars in their courses completely at his service. Tell him your birthday and he will tell you all your secrets. They seem to be encouraging pronouncements as a rule. No need to fear this genial gipsy's warning.

I. B.

The Pupil

"WOT you mean," said old Botwhistle, when I had explained the scheme to him half a dozen times, "is that if I see somebody wot I know, it mayn't be 'im at all?" "That's the idea exactly," I said. "Then 'oo will it be?" he asked. "A spy," I said. "Ah," said Botwhistle.

It appeared that he knew about spies, having once read a magazine story. He supposed we'd shoot the spy. "We would if it were a real one," I said, "but to-day it will be one of the fellows in our own No. 3 Section, pretending."

That required further explanation. "Pretending to be a spy who is pretending to be somebody else," I said. Botwhistle sat in the ditch and chewed stalks of grass: I suppose they helped concentration. His mutterings showed he had grasped that the focal point of the scheme was pretence of some sort. But I doubt if he ever became quite clear about it.

A farmer came down the field-path towards us, and I pressed the point of my bayonet against his yellow waistcoat. The language that resulted was suspiciously suggestive of our No. 3 Section; but Botwhistle remembered evenings at the "Pig and Cow," so I let him pass.

After he had gone, Botwhistle returned to the ditch and was preoccupied. At last he said, "That farmer chap—he might have been pretendin' someping." "Pretending what?" I demanded. "I dunno," said Botwhistle.

I explained patiently that pretences of a non-military and extraneous character did not count. It was no concern of ours, I said, if the local criminal pretended innocence, or—for example—anyone pretended to think Botwhistle intelligent.

Trade, on our field-path, improved. While I examined the papers of the Vicar I let Botwhistle deal with a young farm-hand. I finished with the Church in time to save us from disaster: Botwhistle had just let his man through when I cried "Stop! You're Bert Carter of our No. 3 Section." "That's right, Sir," he said. "Going through our lines as a spy?" I said. "Trying to," he grinned.

I put him on the list as our first victim and told him to scream. Then I opened my heart to Botwhistle. "Why on earth did you let him through?" I demanded. "An obvious spy—he hadn't even troubled about a disguise."

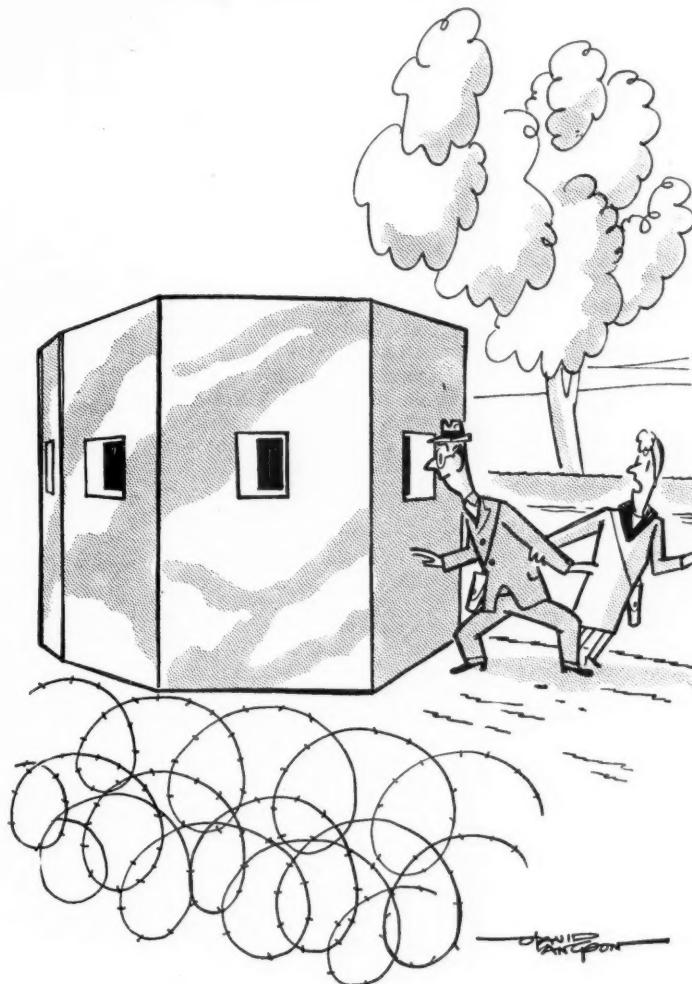
"Well, I dunno," said Botwhistle. "E was only Bert Carter—e worn't pretendin' nothing!"

I told Botwhistle to learn from example if he couldn't from precept. He was to watch me as I dealt with a spy. A woman who was approaching aroused my direst suspicions. Her feet were size 10 at least, her hands were like hams, she was virile in every movement. As I got into a good defensive position I found that Botwhistle, far from trying to learn, had retired to his favourite ditch behind the hedge. But I had no time for him. "Stick 'em up!" I ordered. "No games, now: *you* wouldn't deceive the village idiot." She looked

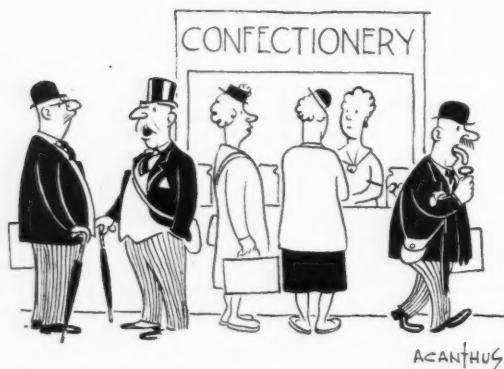
at me with dislike, and one ham-like hand was raised as if, bayonet or no bayonet, she meant to give me a clout on the ear. "I don't want no words from you, Mister," she said. "You 'and over my old man. I told 'im to stay in this arternoon and lend a 'and with the mangling. I'll learn 'im to go out in the week when I wants 'im in. Come on, now, Mister. 'E's 'iding in that ditch be'ind you."

* * * * *

"Well, I did 'ope," said Botwhistle, when I sympathized with him on the following day, "that it was only somebody pretendin' to be 'er, like you said it would. But you was wrong. I knew that as soon as I got 'ome."



"Careful, George—careful!"



"I don't usually eat toffee-apples unless I can't get any!"

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Liverpool and the Slave Trade

MISS AVERIL MACKENZIE-GRIEVE, in her book entitled *The Last Years of the English Slave Trade* (PUTNAM, 15/-), confines herself almost entirely to Liverpool, of which she draws a pleasantly fanciful picture as she imagines the city may have looked about 1750, just after the new Act had been passed for extending and improving her trade with Africa. It was not until thirty years had passed that Abolition began to be regarded as something more than the dream of a few fanatics, and the merchants of Liverpool addressed a petition to Parliament humbly pointing out that they stood in grave danger of being ruined should the Bill be passed. Miss MACKENZIE-GRIEVE gives a very full account of the manner in which various slave-ship captains obtained their cargoes, the horrors of the Middle Passage, the delays and dangers from privateers, pirates, mutinies and so forth, not excluding the press-gang, which was perhaps as much feared as any. Then she deals with the MANSFIELD judgment in the case of Somersett v. Knowles, followed by a chapter dealing with the relations between captains and owners, and another about the Rev. JOHN NEWTON, that so remarkable ex-slaver, "infidel and libertine" who became subsequently Vicar of Olney in Bucks, friend of the poet COWPER, and adviser of WILLIAM WILBERFORCE. The author's descriptions are perhaps too consciously picturesque, and she includes too much correspondence in battered English from native chiefs and ships' captains. But we except the story of Captain HUGH CROW, who seems to have been a thoroughly competent and kindly commander and also a resourceful fighter. He once engaged by accident at night two British men-of-war, and received a certificate of gallantry from one of the captains. The account too of his escape from a French prison is perhaps the best thing in the book.

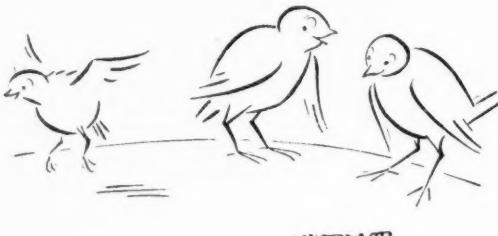
Streamlined Tudors

Ramping Cat (CAPE, 9/6), Mr. CHRISTIAN MAWSON's first novel, is an amusing and ingenious book. Told in the first person by Lord Edmund Howard, the Duke of Norfolk's younger brother, it opens with Lord Edmund resolving to get rid of his man, Ewer. Old Moffat, rather to his surprise,

for they knew each other only by sight, had come up to him in the club one day and recommended Ewer as a first-class servant—"Absolute wizard, he is." But after three months of Ewer, Lord Edmund had come to the conclusion that Ewer was a spy. By easy stages Mr. MAWSON breaks it to the reader that Lord Edmund, in spite of his modern setting, is living in the reign of Henry VIII, and is the father of Catherine Howard, destined in due course to be Henry's fifth wife. The villain of the book is Thomas Cromwell, who leads the German party in England and has established a reign of terror by methods similar to HIMMLER's. Cromwell's power depends on the King remaining constant to his German wife, Anne of Cleves. The anti-Cromwell party, led by Norfolk ("Spanker" to his brother Edmund), realizing that the King is personally repelled by Anne and values her only for political reasons, use Catherine Howard to unseat Anne, and ruin Cromwell. Lord Edmund, an amiable soul and good, if not very intelligent, patriot, is disgusted by Spanker's unscrupulous use of his daughter, but becomes reconciled to it as the only sure means of ridding England of Cromwell. The modern setting, which Mr. MAWSON no doubt decided upon in order to bring home to the reader what England would be like under HITLER, is by no means as jarring as might be supposed, possibly owing to the fact that very few readers have a lively image of England under the second Tudor. But the spirit of self-sacrifice in which Catherine consented to become a queen is not quite convincing.

Ipsden to Ipoh

There are some who are kept awake at night, less by the terrors of totalitarian war than by anticipation of a totalitarian peace. So much of the liberty for which we fight vanishes in the fighting that an invalid poet, tethered, but not inactively, to rural Oxfordshire, may not only be pardoned but blessed for voicing his doubts and hopes in stinging and soaring rhymed couplets. "A lineal parrot on the perch of Pope," MR. MARTYN SKINNER describes for the benefit of an old schoolfellow, now a Civil Servant in Malaya, the horrors of mass-produced life closing in on, and permeating, Oxford. He describes a world given over "to conscript work and—worse—to conscript joys," and praises the heroic nonconformity of the few who resist. He also portrays—and very beautifully—such fragments of England as remain: the England of teams and furrows, of wood-fires and window-seats, the countryside that is not a pastime but a vocation. So coyly have our younger poets turned their backs on the workaday world that this particular poet's challenge flares up like a beacon in a black-out. Bravo, Mr. SKINNER! There is fuel and to spare for more *Letters to Malaya* (PUTNAM, 5/-).



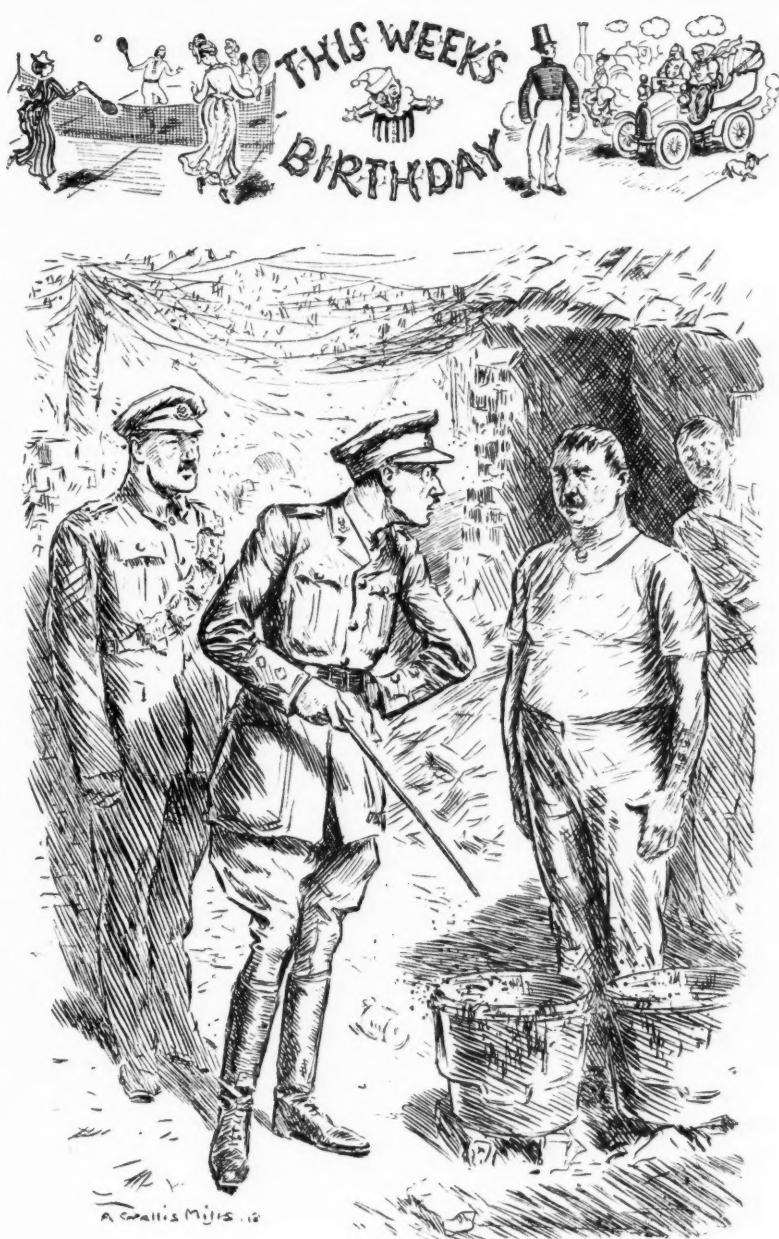
"Yes, he's got my eyes, but he's got his daddy's dibederal."

Mr. Priestley's New Order

The views of Mr. J. B. PRIESTLEY, as well as his forthright manner of expressing them, are pretty well known to readers and listeners by now. *Out of the People* (COLLINS AND HEINEMANN, 2/6) is the first of a new series, aptly named the Vigilant Books, edited by a powerful quintet, of which Mr. PRIESTLEY himself is one. And let us say that he makes a good watch-dog, with a truly formidable bark and some sound notions about his new and vital democracy. He draws a distinction, not always realized, between the Masses and the People. The Masses, he explains, are not real human beings. They have been de-humanized. HITLER is essentially a manipulator of the masses, crushing everywhere the people's individuality. And what we have to guard against as we march along the road to the true democracy is the danger of the People being turned into Masses through leading a robot-like existence tending machines for seven or eight hours a day and so losing their central human dignity. Then again, our conception of politics is all wrong. Political life, he maintains, should not be thought of as a career. Like Holy Orders, it should be a vocation. And once again we must draw a distinction between the State and the Community. The deification of the State has been at the root of most of Germany's trouble. Changes, therefore, are necessary, and in an appendix our author makes a few tentative suggestions. A reformed House of Commons, a Senate instead of our out-worn House of Lords—we may be permitted to retain our Royal House, shorn of its feudal trappings—a reorganization (of course) of the Ministry of Information, the B.B.C., and the Civil Service generally, and the encouragement of Agriculture. Mostly sound enough—if that Old School Tie phobia, of which we are rather tired, did not keep breaking in.

He-Men and White Men

Swamp Water (COLLINS, 7/6), by Mr. VEREEN BELL, is, say his publishers, "without question one of the best fiction discoveries of 1941." That is dangerously high praise for a book which, though it is sure of popularity among admirers of the GENE STRATTON PORTER type of novel, and (since it is to be filmed) certain of large sales, is by no means everyone's meat, good film-stuff though it is. The story tells of a boy and his dog who wander into the Okefenokee Swamp, where they meet an outlawed trapper—a very "white" and husky man who murdered to defend his sister's honour. There is a lot of killing and love-making and loyalty, a touch of



Orderly Officer (to cook). "GOOD LORD, MAN, YOU MUST KEEP YOUR POTS AND PANS CLEANER—THE FLIES ARE ALL OVER THEM. DO YOU KNOW THAT ONE FLY COULD KILL A GENERAL?"

A. Wallis Mills, October 2nd, 1918

wistfulness, some good descriptions of animal life in the Swamp, and a few pages of real excitement when the boy, refusing to give away his friend, is nearly drowned by some of his rougher acquaintances. But the style is staccato and we have met the type of characters too often before. It is a pity Mr. BELL, who knows his ground well, did not concentrate more on the wild life of the Swamp.

Looking Back

THIS is about the time of year when, in happier days, cricket scribes were wont to write a review of the season, interspersed (if they were the literary kind) with little couplets of Keats. And in case one of them survives I should like to bring to his notice that game described in the local press with admirable reticence as "H.M. Ship *versus* H.M. Battleship."

Not that it was a particularly thrilling game. No—what places it on a peak in my eyes is the simple fact that the Engineer-Lieutenant having cut his thumb, the Captain's Secretary having met a new and winsome young lady, and three Able-Seamen (fast bowlers) being under stoppage of leave, I was bullied by the Padre into playing.

At my preparatory school I was one of those ferretty small boys with iron-rimmed glasses, and you didn't have to look twice to know I was the scorer. I had two pencils, a razor blade and a large indiarubber: at the end of the season I appeared in the team photograph with a huge book clutched to my breast and a confident smile on my face.

Frankly, I was no good at the game, and this state of affairs has persisted.

I don't know about you, but personally I am always delighted when my side loses the toss. It usually means that we get a fiery wicket, the worst of the light and lose the game; but it frequently has the advantage that it is at least two hours before I have to bat. I was really delighted when the Padre called wrongly and I was enabled to stand fairly comfortably on the boundary in the shade of an oak tree.

This was all very well, but there is a curious custom in the cricketing world that when a wicket falls someone grabs the ball and gives you a practice catch.

This happened to me. I heard my name called and awoke in time to see the ball disappearing into the blue (these catches always soar miles into the air). The ball topped the trees, climbed steadily and then began to dive vertically at me at alarming speed. There was no one to whom I could generously say "Yours." I had no option but to hold out my hands. There was a searing pain and, looking down, I found the ball reposing snugly in my palms.

This gave me confidence. The Padre said: "Well held, Sir." (Always praise if they call you "Sir.") And

it didn't even matter that in returning the ball I struck mid-off a sharp blow on the temple. I began to feel that, after all, I could play the game.

The feeling persisted even when the other side had all been dismissed and we returned to the pavilion. It was still there when I realized with a pang that, five wickets being down, I should probably have to join the Admiral at the wicket. The Admiral is not so slim as he was, and I was conscious of my habit of rushing down the pitch, halting petrified in the middle, shouting "Come on! Stay! Go back!" and usually—let's face it—causing some trouble.

No—to-day for the first time I realized that cricket was all a bluff. It was all in one's attitude. I garbed myself, picked up a bat called "Victory" and signed by none other than Don Bradman himself (it had, also, three springs—a fact which used to count a good deal with me at school) and began to bite the batting gloves.

My moment was not long delayed. The Padre, who had himself made a duck, told me to take it easy.

"Play yourself in," he said.

Vain words! As if I had ever known what would happen between one ball and the next.

The umpire was an Able-Seaman. I must say he had turned himself out very smartly and his gym shoes were snowy white. But he was one of those umpires who insist on giving you guard—whether you want it or not. There is usually a big enough pit dug by somebody and with that I am quite content. But the Able-Seaman not only insisted on the guard but he bent down and peered at me over the stumps. He put his hand in front of his nose and moved it (the hand, not the nose) carefully one way and the other. Then he gave a huge chop through the air.

"To leg," he announced.

(What does this mean?)

And there I was. The bowler was pawing the ground like a restive horse, the Admiral was gazing down the pitch and the umpire had bent down again and was looking at me. I then did a thing the audacity of which has since caused me to tremble.

I gazed round at the fielders!

I think this must have impressed the bowler because he gave me a particularly wily ball. I struck at it and missed—and a large fat man fielding in the slips lifted both his

hands, placed them on his head, and smoothed them upwards. This gesture is pretty well as close to vulgarity as you can get in cricket and means, "Cor, close."

I kept this large fat man busy with his arms for the rest of the over.

The bowler was one of those who trot up to the wicket, shuffle, cough, hiccup, and project a treacly ball into the heavens. The fellow at the other end was better, and after the Admiral had scratched a gouty single I faced him. He was a fierce bowler. He knew exactly how many paces he intended to run and when he got there he scratched his boot on the grass. Then he careered hot-foot at the wicket, leapt into the air and projected both the ball and himself through the air. It had the advantage of being all over in a remarkably short space of time.

I opened my account off this bowler. Still oozing confidence I shaped for a really long hit and was delighted to see the ball disappear like lightning through the slips. (The Padre shouted, "Nice!"—the Admiral looked daggers.) I scored also in the following over—a dashing four off my gloves and the wicket-keeper's head.

But now something significant happened. A new bowler appeared—a man I feared above all and for the very good reason that he wore a cricketing-cap. But it wasn't a strict, neatly-cut, coloured cap—it was a bunched affair, like a soft doughnut. It was, in short, the sort of cap Australians wear.

I knew my number was up. It was.

I hit the first ball—where I had no idea—but it produced a variety of noises, like throwing meat into the lion house. The Admiral shouted "Run a catch, man!" the wicket-keeper shouted "Mine!" someone else said "Yours!" and then everyone clapped.

I was out.

I had made seven.

I had not run the Admiral out.

Often I slyly turn up the score-book and read: c. Pink, b. O'Reilly. But the last I don't suppose is anything more than a coincidence.

○ ○

Protective Wall

Several came forward and were allowed to work outside the barbed wire under picket close to the Crag Malin Hotel, which surrounds the wire entanglements."

Daily Paper.



The Magnifying Glass

WITH this clear Glass
I can make *Magic* talk—
A myriad shells show
In a scrap of chalk;

In but an inch of moss
A forest—flowers and trees;
A drop of water
Like a hive of bees.

I lie in wait, and watch
How the deft spider jets
The shimmering web-silk
From his spinnerets.

What tigrish claws he has!
And oh, the silly flies
That tumble into his nets—
With all those eyes!

Not even the tiniest thing
But this my glass
Will make more marvellous
And itself surpass.

Yes, and with lenses like it,
Facing the moon,
Twould seem you'd walk there
In an afternoon!

Ah, if my mind itself
Could win no less
Vivid a vision
And that amleness! W. DE LA M.

EMETT

Bed

I AM not suggesting for a moment that my experiences on leave are at all typical. I have always been told by my nearest and dearest, who ought to know, that I am a curious individual.

When I first saw my hotel bedroom my reactions were perfectly normal. I looked at the bed, which had a great fat red eiderdown quilt on it, and I said: "Ah!"

Then I turned down the quilt and the first few layers of blankets and things and felt the softness of the mattress.

"Ah!" I said again.

For three months I had been sleeping on boards, with a palliasse so thin that it was a mere mockery. I changed into my civilian clothes and went down to dinner. The white cloth and the shining silver and glasses were very pleasing, and the waitress was a definite improvement on our Army mess waiter. Even the food tasted like food. But only half my mind was on these things. The other half was straining at the leash to get inside that lovely bed.

It was 7.45 when I finished dinner, so I went to the pictures. The film was about two men and a woman. I fancy they were both in love with her, or something, but I am extremely vague about the whole thing, because all I really wanted to do was to go back to the hotel to bed. To-night, I told myself, I would stretch my feet out in front of me as far as they would go.

In the tent the pole gets in the way, and if you put your feet on the left side of it they get mixed up with Sapper Purver's feet, and as Sapper Purver has nightmares in which he thinks he is on a route-march this does not pay. On the other side of the tent-pole is the sub-section commander's tin box, in which he keeps maps, spare braces, etc. The box does not move about during the night, like Sapper Purver's feet, but it is a high sort of box, and if you put your feet on it your legs are up a steep hill.

I left the cinema quite unaware of which of the two men had eventually won the lady. I found my hotel, had a final beer, and then, after a hot bath, went to bed. I threw off my clothes with great rapidity and literally jumped between the sheets. I snuggled down into the heaven of softness.

"I will try to keep awake for five seconds or so," I told myself, "before enjoying the best night's sleep I will have had for three months, because philosophers tell us that anticipation is the best part of pleasure."

I managed to keep awake for five seconds, for five minutes, for fifty minutes. I seemed unable to go to sleep and began to feel slightly aggrieved. Then the solution occurred to me.

"Of course," I chuckled, "I'm too warm."

I threw the eiderdown quilt to the floor. Ten minutes later a blanket

followed, and ten minutes after that a further blanket. I was now cold enough, but still I did not sleep.

"Perhaps," I admitted reluctantly, "the feather mattress is a trifle too soft."

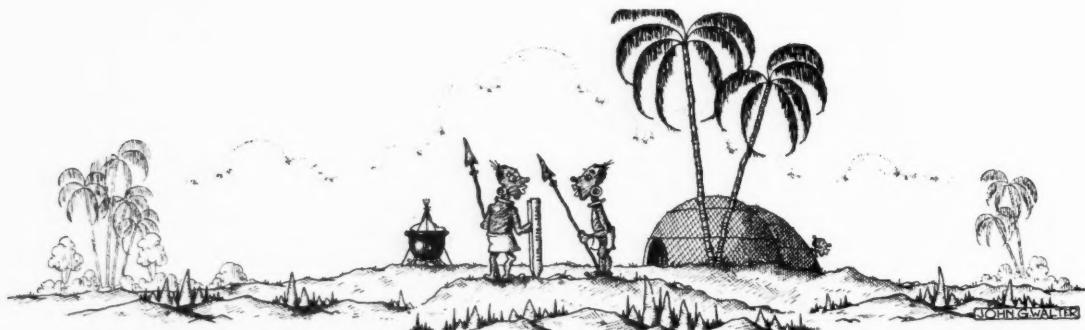
I got out of bed and struggled with the feather mattress, which fought back like some great jungle monster, but I triumphed eventually and it rolled mortally wounded to the floor.

Without the mattress the bed was hard enough, and I was now shivering with cold, but every time I moved, the springs threw me up and down.

I suppose it was about 3 A.M. when I climbed out and lay on the floor under the bed: I used my Army valise (full of lovely knobbly things) as a pillow.

Still I could not sleep. I moved up a little way so that the leg of the bed was where the tent-pole usually got in the way of my feet. Still I had a feeling that something was missing, so I arranged my Army boots on the left side, to represent Sapper Purver's feet, and an upturned drawer from a dressing-table on the other side to represent Corporal Baynes's box. With a sigh of content I arranged my legs uphill and was soon sleeping peacefully.

The maid who brought my morning tea and *Daily Blare* had a nasty shock when she called me in the morning, but somebody always has to suffer in this world.



"Since they started controlling them, missionaries seem to be practically unobtainable."

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